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Every year the community eagerly awaits the [annual show and sale of pottery](#) from the studio of Donald Taylor (Art). Through Taylor's generosity, proceeds have built an \$80,000 endowment that supports art scholarships at St. Norbert.

April 2011

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## Exhibition caps off Taylor's career

Around campus and around the world, **Donald Taylor (Art)** is known as a potter and ceramicist. But he has worked with the twin media of light and shadow as much as he has with clay.

During his 27 years as the college's gallery director and art curator – a career ending with his retirement in May – each show he has arranged has been its own work of art. Taylor says it takes a skilled aesthetic “to truly spotlight, in the most literal sense of the word, people's artwork.”

His own work takes center stage in a retrospective exhibition opening at 7 p.m. on April 7 in the Baer Gallery of the Bush Art Center. The pieces featured, primarily ceramics, span more than 40 years of Taylor's career.

“This is the culmination of a lifetime of work,” Taylor says.

Through the decades, Taylor has become “an exquisite, elegant potter,” says **Bill Bohné (Art)**. “He can hold his own with anyone.”

Visitors to the [exhibition](#) will enjoy some of Taylor's finest works, including thin-slab porcelain pieces that he describes as “distinctly me.” Built around custom wood forms, they incorporate stamped textures and are fine to the point of translucence.

The retrospective also will highlight pieces used to illustrate several ceramics books, along with some of Taylor's personal favorites. “I have one particularly wonderful copper-red covered jar that I like a lot, and it's not been seen too often because I was smart enough to keep it for myself,” he says.

Through service on the Northeastern Wisconsin Arts Council board and the area's Public Art Committee, Taylor has advocated art in the community. His annual pottery sale also has made art accessible, putting some 1,500 works into the hands of the public since 1986 while building an endowment of \$80,000 to support art scholarships.

Taylor honed his craft in Wisconsin and on the West Coast. He served on the faculty at the University of Puget Sound, where he earned his master of fine arts degree in 1971, as well as the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay and Gonzaga University.

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As an adjunct art professor at St. Norbert, he has taught printmaking, drawing and design, 3-D design, raku pottery, clay and metals, ceramics, computer graphics and educational methods. One student to benefit from his instruction: Los Angeles-based character designer, author and illustrator **Chris Ayers '97**, who will attend the Taylor exhibition opening and hold a [book signing](#) while on campus.

“I am very grateful for all that he taught me, both in and outside of the classroom,” Ayers says. “He was a strong supporter and driving force behind me studying abroad in Italy, an experience that was life-changing on many levels. He also exposed me to many freelance opportunities, which were great practice and beginning experiences for what has become a career as a professional artist.”

Bohné says Taylor’s gallery work has given voice to the entire art faculty: “We see the gallery as an extended medium of ourselves. ... We’re really known and expressed through our works, so (the gallery) is a really important element of communication between us and the rest of the community.”

“In the arts, we show what we have done by exhibiting our artwork rather than publishing,” Taylor says. His job, then, has been akin to that of an editor: “I can’t make anybody’s work better than it is, but I can make it look its best.”

In that sense, Taylor has devoted much of his life to shedding flattering light on the arts.

*April 5, 2011*

